

The 2016 Oscars



This year, the Oscars were handed out amid a backdrop of controversy surrounding cultural diversity in the movie industry. This is way more than a Black and White issue because who is represented on the silver screen has never been an accurate reflection of everyone in our society, but simply the reflection of who has the resources needed to finance the films they want to make. It is, after

all meant to be entertainment and show business. It is the real and fictional stories that are told and the way the storytellers tell them that really matter.

Documentaries aside, whether it is big budget films or arthouses that finance those smaller independent stories, often, they are the same players under different titles. Talent in whatever form should be recognized, but there has always been great talent that was not honored. A collaborative and collective shared responsibility may be more effective as opposed to adopting adversarial stances against the mainstream.

Maybe those who have broken through racial barriers could use their box office power and experience to help writers of other cultures develop projects and compete with the mainstream in the same arena. It feels like there are a lot of under-represented groups that we could focus on and some were mentioned Sunday night, but those who thought that what Chris Rock had to say was not sufficient might consider that in order to change a system, you have to remain part of it and work from inside it to make the changes you want to see. Biting the hand that feeds you might mean that you starve. Irreverence makes its own statement.



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If Will Smith or Jaime Foxx wanted to produce some films and have a completely diverse cast, crew, director and writers I am sure they could get it done. New doors have to be built and those doors need to open wider, but I am certain that Sidney Poitier, Denzel Washington or Morgan Freeman were just as happy to receive their statues as Leonardo was on Sunday. I watch the Oscars to root for my favorite, regardless of ethnicity. The Oscars are there for us to see ourselves as interpreted by artists. I would love to see more work on the screen by more and more diverse artists. There are annual film festivals dedicated to smaller films that deserve Academy attention. It would be amazing if there were a coalition of diverse artists who got together with the goal of creating the best films in the world. See your work at the Oscars next year?